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COUNTRY Albania

SUBJECT Military - Troop dispositions, training, fortifications

HOW PUBLISHED Weekly newspaper

DATE DIST. 22 Apr 1953

WHERE PUBLISHED Athens

NO. OF PAGES 2

DATE PUBLISHED 1 Mar 1953

LANGUAGE Greek

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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RECENT MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA

The Albanian Army today numbers about 40,000 men organized in five divisions of about 8,000 men each. The bulk of the forces has been posted along the Yugoslav frontiers and at Tirana, Kruje, Peshkopi, Shkoder, Mirdite, Korce, and Gjinokaster. Also, there are strong frontier guard forces along the Adriatic coast. Patrols are set up in depth 5 kilometers from each other. The Albanian Army is modeled on the Soviet pattern and includes every branch of specialization.

Albanian military fortifications along the Greek frontier were completed during the guerrilla war [1946-1949]. However, the Albanian government at present has turned its attention toward the Yugoslav border. Many fortifications have been built in the Tropoje, Peshkopi, and Lesh regions.

Military training is directed by Soviet officers. Each army division has a high-ranking Soviet officer. The same pattern is found on each army level, even to the lower military units. The Albanian Army was equipped completely with Soviet materiel during the last month. Up to that time it had been using German and Italian weapons of World War II vintage.

Albania has hardly any air force. A report claiming that formations of fighter planes have appeared in Albania is not true. At the Tirana airfield, there are three or four old-model Italian planes which are used for training. At times they are also used to spray marshy areas in order to check malaria. The airfields of Berat and Devoll Valley have become swamps and a part of them has been turned into a cultivated area.

The Albanian police are also organized on the Soviet pattern. There are many secret agents who are paid well and are active in every sector of political activity.

Artillery and antiaircraft guns have been set up along the entire Albanian coast and at the most significant points [throughout Albania?]. Recently, rumors have been circulating that the island of Sazan is being prepared as a

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base for Soviet pocket submarines. But it has also been claimed that this rumor was "made up" by irresponsible Albanian elements who hoped to attract the attention of the large countries to Albania's problems. The island of Sazan is actually completely deserted. There are antiaircraft guns on the island which fire whenever a foreign plane flies over Albanian territory. Albanian citizens are forbidden to go on the island. The reason for this is that munitions are located there and the authorities cannot guarantee against accidents.

There is hardly any Albanian Navy. There are only a few ships for coastal inspection.

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